REFLECTION

The impact of mobile technology in the classroom can be tremendous. At the very least, it can allow teachers to become “untethered” from their desks and computers, and free to move more freely around the classroom. That alone can let teachers be more actively engaged with their students while taking advantage of the technology tools we’ve embraced. The “app for that” philosophy means that the effectiveness of mobile technology is nearly limitless – as a need or use is identified, wither the marketplace will produce it or educators themselves will begin to create apps.

As students use mobile technology in the classroom, we can hopefully move to an environment that replaces traditional textbooks with resources that are more interactive and continuously updated. It will also mean that students can have all their tools at a touch instead of remembering their calculator, their reflection journal, their free reading material, their periodic table, homework planner, etc. And students will be able to more freely and easily create and publish/share than before.

In my personal life, I plan to use my iPad to increase my effectiveness. The productivity tools available for the iPad are tremendous, such as Evernote, Dropbox, and so on. And further, since many of these tools are cloud-based I can choose the device that is the most convenient and effective. I could take notes at a meeting on my iPad and sync that with my Dropbox and use the notes to send a more detailed summary from my computer without clogging up my inbox.

I thought the John C. Riley Educational Technology Day at Marian University was a tremendous opportunity for educators. One thing that I learned was how much value there is in conferences! So many presenters in sessions had so many great things to share with us that it was hard to fit it into 50-minute sessions. On a related note, I also learned that by sharing freely what we have and know makes it that much easier to receive important information as well. As far as apps go, I was struck by the sheer volume of apps on the marketplace, and how quickly that landscape is changing. I think that ONLY by attending conferences and leveraging Twitter/LinkedIn/Facebook can we hope to make be aware of everything that’s going on! I also learned about two tools that I intend to use in my classroom. The first is wikis – I’d been dismissive of them in the past, but I can definitely see the value that wikis bring as a sharing tool and as an archiving/accessibility tool. The second technology I will use is Google Apps, specifically Forms and Spreadsheets. The session about using forms to create peer review forms and assessments was excellent, and even though I’ve been a Google evangelist for years, I hadn’t utilized Google Apps to that extent before.